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SOCIÉTÉ DE SAUVETAGE

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United Nations Adopts Resolution on Drowning Prevention

OTTAWA, April 29, 2021 – We are thrilled to advise that the UN Resolution on Drowning Prevention (A/75/L.76) was approved by the United Nations General Assembly on Wednesday, April 28, 2021. You can access the Resolution at:

Eng. – <https://www.undocs.org/en/A/75/L.76>

Fr. – <https://www.undocs.org/fr/A/75/L.76>

This UN resolution is a sentinel step that will focus attention and action on this highly preventable public health challenge. The resolution will increase UN agency awareness and actions to reduce drowning. The resolution will encourage the engagement of national governments to reduce the burden of drowning through effective policies and legislation, research, and support for community-based drowning prevention action.

This first UN Resolution on Drowning Prevention was proposed by Bangladesh and Ireland. More than 50 nations, including Canada's UN Mission staff, participated in text editing this document. It is a significant milestone in a long journey in which Canada has played a key role.

The Resolution:

- is in response to deep concern that drowning has been the cause of over 2.5 million preventable deaths in the past decade but has been largely unrecognised relative to its impact.
- notes that more than 90 per cent of deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries, with Asia carrying the highest burden of drowning deaths by number.
- notes that drowning disproportionately affects children and adolescents in rural areas, with many countries reporting drowning as the leading cause of childhood mortality.
- clarifies that the official global estimate of 235,000 deaths per annum excludes drownings attributable to flood-related climatic events and water transport incidents, resulting in the underrepresentation of drowning deaths by up to 50 per cent in some countries.
- identifies July 25th as World Drowning Prevention Day starting in 2021.

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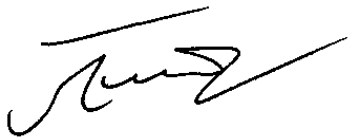
Canada was a co-sponsor of the UN Resolution. Canada's support for the Resolution aligns with global and domestic priorities for safe activities and improved health for all.

Canada is well placed to achieve all (and more) of the voluntary actions that the Resolution encourages Members States to adopt. All the key World Health Organization recommended interventions are addressed across Canada.

The Lifesaving Society Canada is a well-developed national lead agency for lifesaving and drowning prevention that works in close collaboration with the Drowning Prevention Research Centre Canada and its Canadian Drowning Prevention Coalition.

Additionally, Canada is positioned to support international cooperation by sharing lessons learned and best practices. In fact, our leadership has already contributed to this milestone through collaboration with the World Health Organization, International Life Saving Federation, the Commonwealth Royal Life Saving Society and with drowning prevention intervention projects in Bangladesh and the Caribbean.

The resolution is the result of years of work by many people and organizations in the global drowning prevention community. We thank them for their leadership on this important issue. Particular thanks is owed to the Royal National Lifeboat Institute (RNLI) who resourced this international effort with highly skilled personnel and financial support.



Martin Forcier
President
Lifesaving Society Canada



Dr. Stephen Beerman
Chair
Canadian Drowning Prevention Coalition

The Canadian Drowning Prevention Coalition is a committee of the Drowning Prevention Research Centre – the lead agency for drowning research in Canada and partner of the Lifesaving Society.